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# Jesus and the New Age: A Commentary on St Luke's Gospel

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shared in the language of the lament psalms, e.g. Psalm 22, the latter appears in the passion narrative. Thirdly, Psalm 22, affirms deliverance from suffering. The evangelists view the entire psalm, suffering and salvation from it, hence the element of praise.

The reviewer finds this book a welcome addition to psalm studies, not least the insights of the introduction and the incisive analyses of structure in each of the psalms presented.

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### **Jesus and the New Age: A Commentary on St. Luke's Gospel**

Frederick W. Danker

Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988

xx + 410 pages

Danker has revised his *Jesus and the New Age* (St. Louis: Clayton, 1972). He argues that the evangelist's "linguistic versatility and compositional technique combine with keen perception of the substantive issues of history to produce a unique work permeated with dramatic sensitivity" (3). Danker recreates the non-Jewish cultural setting in which the Gospel was composed and for which it was chiefly addressed, utilizing contemporary Greco-Roman sources. This revised edition contains additional parallels which he discovered revising the English edition of W. Bauer's *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Through references to the Hebrew Bible Danker demonstrates that Luke likewise addressed those steeped in Jewish tradition as well as teaching gentiles about the roots of Christianity. Danker argues that Luke portrays Jesus as "Benefactor", a Greco-Roman literary ideal of superior excellence, persons or deities concerned for the welfare of the city and citizenry above personal considerations (3). Jesus announces a "New Age", both for the future and for those who believe.

Danker designed this verse-by-verse commentary for the non-professional reader and uses minimal "technical jargon" (21). There is an extensive introduction, as well as introductions and summaries for the various units. Optional portions of commentary are set off to be read for deeper understanding (1). The Revised Standard Version is used except where he corrects its renderings. He utilizes inclusive terms for God and the community of faith. Unfortunately, the texts of the various units are not reprinted, making a companion Bible a necessity. Numerous parallels and cross-references to other books of the New Testament are included and help the reader make quick comparisons. Special attention is given to the book of Acts, the second work of Luke, to demonstrate parallels and theme development. Danker also takes particular concern to provide background for passages which involve women.

This commentary is more exegetical than homiletical. Danker reserves most comments or suggested applications to witty side remarks or for comparisons, usually unfavourable, between modern authorities (religious and secular) and institutions existing during Jesus' earthly ministry. (Much of this perhaps comes from Danker's transition from teaching at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, to Semineer Professor of New Testament at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.) So also, he often refers to other commentators, either agreeing with them or contesting their viewpoints. A short but comprehensive bibliography aids the reader to pursue topics of interest.

Overall, this commentary is very thorough, indeed almost too much so. Danker's suggestion that one will be able to read it in several settings (1) is overly optimistic if he wishes the reader to absorb the material and wade through the parallels offered. It is a very important tool for understanding the Gospel in its original context and for discerning how to apply its teaching to the present day.

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## **Exodus and Exile: The Structure of the Jewish Holidays**

Monford Harris  
Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992  
129 pages

Classic rabbinic thought supported the idea that there exist variant ways of interpreting Torah, of which all are legitimate. This is exemplified by the passage in *Bamidbar Rabbah* (13:15-16) proclaiming that "there are 70 modes of expounding the Torah". That sense of creative license is still very much alive within contemporary Judaism.

The tone of *Exodus and Exile*, therefore, must be viewed as problematic. For though the author does a thorough and creative job of illuminating the historical aspects of the Jewish holidays, and of putting them into the perspective of a theology consistent with an historical outlook, he does so at the expense of competing interpretations.

There can be no doubt, as Harris repeatedly points out, that Jewish "holidays embody a sense of time and historical reality" (1). In contrast to others, whose consciousness, he states, is "ahistorical... Jewish existence and, therefore, its celebrations have always been historically oriented" (2). The book explains the evolution of this historical consciousness and then proceeds to explain the historical orientation of each of the holidays from the vantage point of the Exodus to Exile phenomena. "Exodus and Exile